

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A multimedia system comprising:  
one or more end-user terminals;  
5 an external device, wherein said one or more end-user terminals and said  
external device employ means for communicating; and  
means for modifying a set of multimedia data, accessible to said external  
device, for one or more end-users, based on a number of end-user preferences and  
based on a number of terminal and communication connection capabilities which  
10 individually correspond with each terminal employed by each of the one or more  
end-users, wherein said external device includes means for making the modified  
set of multimedia data accessible to each terminal employed by the one or more  
end-users.
- 15 2. The system of claim 1, wherein said external device is a camera.
3. The system of claim 1, wherein said external device is a server.
4. The system of claim 3, wherein said means for communicating is a wide  
20 area network.
5. The system of claim 3, wherein said means for communicating is a local  
area network.
- 25 6. The system of claim 1, wherein said external device is a disk drive  
associated with said end-user terminal.

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7. The system of claim 1, wherein said means for modifying the set of multimedia data comprises:

means for selecting the set of multimedia data from amongst a larger set of multimedia data.

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8. The system of claim 1, wherein said means for modifying the set of multimedia data comprises:

means for encoding the set of multimedia data.

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9. The system of claim 8, wherein said means for encoding the set of multimedia data comprises:

means for data compressing the set of multimedia data.

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10. The system of claim 1, wherein said means for modifying the set of multimedia data comprises:

means for scaling the set of multimedia data.

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11. A method for achieving a conversational multimedia session involving a plurality of end-users, each having access to a multimedia database, said method comprising the steps of:

identifying a set of multimedia data stored in the multimedia database;

modifying the set of multimedia data, in accordance with a

transcoder/scalability service, based on a number of user preferences and based on a number of terminal and communication connection capabilities associated with

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one or more end-user terminals which correspond to one or more end-users that are to have access to the modified set of multimedia data; and

making the modified set of multimedia data available to said one or more end-users.

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12. The method of claim 11, wherein said step of identifying the set of multimedia data comprises the step of:

selecting the set of multimedia data from a larger set of multimedia data stored on the multimedia database, in accordance with an information adaptation service, based on a number of user preferences and based on a number of terminal and communication connection capabilities associated with one or more end-user terminals which correspond to one or more end-users that are to have access to the modified set of multimedia data.

10 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the larger set of multimedia data relates to a still image.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the selected set of multimedia data comprises one or more regions of interest in the still image.

15 15. The method of claim 13, wherein the selected set of multimedia data comprises a cropped portion of the still image.

16. The method of claim 12, wherein the larger set of multimedia data relates to a video object, and wherein the selected set of multimedia data comprises a segment of the video object.

17. The method of claim 12, wherein the larger set of multimedia data relates to an audio object, and wherein the selected set of multimedia data comprises a segment of the audio object.

18. The method of claim 12, wherein the user preferences are defined by one or more of the end-users.

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19. The method of claim 18, wherein the user preferences include a size associated with the multimedia data subset.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the user preferences include a number of  
5 elements that make up the multimedia data subset.

21. The method of claim 20, wherein the user preferences include a significance value assigned to each element of the multimedia data subset.

10 22. The method of claim 18, wherein the user preferences include a cost associated with making the modified set of multimedia data available to said one or more end-users over a corresponding communication connection.

15 23. The method of claim 12, wherein said terminal capabilities include a display size associated with each of the one or more end-user terminals which correspond to the one or more end-users that are to have access to the modified set of multimedia data.

20 24. The method of claim 12, wherein said terminal capabilities include a level of resolution associated with each of the one or more end-user terminals which correspond to the one or more end-users that are to have access to the modified set of multimedia data.

25 25. The method of claim 12, wherein said terminal capabilities include an amount of processing power associated with each of the one or more end-user terminals which correspond to the one or more end-users that are to have access to the modified set of multimedia data.

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26. The method of claim 12, wherein said communication connection capabilities include an amount of bandwidth.

27. The method of claim 12, wherein said communication connection  
5 capabilities include a bit error rate.

28. The method of claim 11, wherein said step of modifying the set of multimedia data, in accordance with a transcoder/scalability service, comprises the step of:  
10 scaling the subset of multimedia data based on one or more significance values associated with the subset of multimedia data.

29. The method of claim 11, wherein said step of modifying the set of multimedia data, in accordance with a transcoder/scalability service, comprises the  
15 step of:  
encoding the subset of multimedia data based on the one or more terminal and communication connection capabilities.

30. The method of claim 11, wherein said step of modifying the set of  
20 multimedia data, in accordance with a transcoder/scalability service, comprises the step of:  
data compressing the subset of multimedia data based on the one or more terminal and communication connection capabilities.

25 31. A network based multimedia system for achieving a conversational multimedia session between two end-users, said system comprising:  
a multimedia database which is accessible to both end-users;

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means for identifying a set of multimedia data stored in the multimedia database;

transcoder/scalability service means for modifying the set of multimedia data, based on a number of user preferences associated with one or both end-users,  
5 and based on a number of terminal and network connection capabilities associated with an end-user terminal corresponding to one or both end-users; and

means for making the modified set of multimedia data available to one or both end-users.

10 32. The system of claim 31, wherein said means for identifying the set of multimedia data comprises:

information adaptation service means for selecting the set of multimedia data from a larger set of multimedia data stored in the multimedia database, based on the number of user preferences and the number of terminal and network  
15 connection capabilities.

33. The system of claim 32, wherein the user preferences include a size associated with the multimedia data subset.

20 34. The system of claim 32, wherein the user preferences include a number of elements that make up the multimedia data subset.

35. The system of claim 34, wherein the user preferences include a significance value assigned to each element of the multimedia data subset.

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36. The system of claim 32, wherein the user preferences include a cost associated with making the modified set of multimedia data available to one or both end-users over a corresponding network connection.

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37. The system of claim 32, wherein said terminal capabilities include a display size associated with one or both end-user terminals.

5 38. The system of claim 32, wherein said terminal capabilities include a level of resolution associated with one or both end-user terminals.

39. The system of claim 32, wherein said terminal capabilities include an amount of processing power associated with one or both end-user terminals.

10 40. The system of claim 32, wherein said network connection capabilities include an amount of bandwidth.

41. The system of claim 31, wherein said transcoder/scalability service means for modifying the set of multimedia data comprises:

15 means for scaling the subset of multimedia data based on one or more significance values associated with the subset of multimedia data.

42. The system of claim 31, wherein said transcoder/scalability service means for modifying the set of multimedia data comprises:

20 means for encoding the subset of multimedia data based on the one or more terminal and communication connection capabilities.

43. The system of claim 31, wherein said transcoder/scalability service means for modifying the set of multimedia data comprises:

25 means for data compressing the subset of multimedia data based on the one or more terminal and communication connection capabilities.

44. The system of claim 31 further comprises:

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a transcoder that includes said transcoder/scalability service means for modifying the set of multimedia data.

5      45.      The system of claim 44, wherein said transcoder is a network device that communicates with each of the two end-users over a corresponding network connection.

10      46.      The system of claim 45, wherein said transcoder is associated with a server.

47.      The system of claim 45, wherein said transcoder is associated with a gateway device.

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FOOTNOTES